

IC 20-1-1.8

Chapter 1.8. Step Ahead Comprehensive Early Childhood Grant Program

IC 20-1-1.8-1

"Convener"

Sec. 1. As used in this chapter, "convener" means:

- (1) an organization that:
 - (A) is not-for-profit;
 - (B) is nongovernmental;
 - (C) is not religiously affiliated;
 - (D) operates countywide; and
 - (E) serves multiple agencies;
- (2) a school corporation (as defined in IC 20-6.1-1-5); or
- (3) another entity approved by the panel.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-2

"Coordination grant"

Sec. 2. As used in this chapter, "coordination grant" refers to a step ahead grant awarded to initiate the development of a step ahead proposal.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-3

"Eligible entity"

Sec. 3. As used in this chapter, "eligible entity" means any of the following:

- (1) A school corporation (as defined in IC 20-6.1-1-5).
- (2) An organization approved by the panel.
- (3) Any combination of eligible entities described in subdivisions (1) and (2) under a cooperative agreement among the eligible entities.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21. Amended by P.L.20-1992, SEC.42; P.L.21-1992, SEC.9.

IC 20-1-1.8-4

"Eligible program"

Sec. 4. As used in this chapter, "eligible program" means a federal, state, local, or private program or service aimed at serving, assisting, or otherwise benefiting a child as approved by the governor and the panel under guidelines developed under section 17 of this chapter. The term includes the following programs or services:

- (1) Child care.
- (2) Preschool, including special education preschool.
- (3) Parent information, including parents as teachers.
- (4) School age child care (commonly referred to as latch key) as described in IC 12-17-12-5 and IC 20-5-2-1.2(c), including latch key services for kindergarten pupils.
- (5) Early identification and early intervention.

(6) Maternal and child nutrition.

(7) Health and screening.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21. Amended by P.L.20-1992, SEC.43; P.L.21-1992, SEC.10; P.L.1-1993, SEC.172; P.L.25-2001, SEC.1.

IC 20-1-1.8-5

"Implementation grant"

Sec. 5. (a) As used in this chapter, "implementation grant" refers to a step ahead grant that is awarded to a step ahead county to provide financial assistance to eligible entities providing eligible programs.

(b) The term includes the use of available state appropriations and available federal funds, including federal funds received under the Child Care and Development Block Grant under 42 U.S.C. 658 et seq.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-6

"Income eligibility guidelines"

Sec. 6. As used in this chapter, "income eligibility guidelines" refers to the income eligibility guidelines prescribed by the panel under section 17 of this chapter.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-7

"Panel"

Sec. 7. As used in this chapter, "panel" refers to the step ahead panel established under section 13 of this chapter.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-8

"Parent"

Sec. 8. As used in this chapter, "parent" means the individual who has legal custody of a child.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-9

"Step ahead"

Sec. 9. As used in this chapter, "step ahead" refers to the step ahead comprehensive early childhood grant program established under section 11 of this chapter.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-10

"Step ahead county"

Sec. 10. As used in this chapter, "step ahead county" refers to a county in which an eligible entity has been awarded coordination and implementation grants. The term may include more than one (1) county as provided in section 17 of this chapter.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-11

Establishment of program; purpose; administration of Child Care and Development Block Grant; state funding

Sec. 11. (a) The step ahead comprehensive early childhood grant program is established to provide financial assistance and other incentives to eligible entities to implement, coordinate, and monitor eligible programs countywide.

(b) The division of family and children shall administer the Child Care and Development Block Grant under 42 U.S.C. 658 et seq. received by the division of family and children in accordance with the guidelines established by the step ahead panel under section 17 of this chapter.

(c) The state panel shall use available state funds to the extent the general assembly makes an appropriation under this chapter.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21. Amended by P.L.2-1992, SEC.687.

IC 20-1-1.8-11.1

Unexpended funds

Sec. 11.1. Unexpended money at the end of a state fiscal year appropriated under this chapter from the state general fund does not revert to the state general fund.

As added by P.L.20-1992, SEC.44; P.L.21-1992, SEC.11.

IC 20-1-1.8-12

Goals of program

Sec. 12. The goals of step ahead are as follows:

- (1) To identify and recognize the various eligible programs available in each county at federal, state, local, and private levels.
- (2) To encourage coordination and cooperation among the eligible programs described in subdivision (1) and to discourage duplication of services.
- (3) To provide comprehensive eligible programs countywide that are accessible to all eligible children and affordable to the children's parents.
- (4) To recognize the specific service needs of and unique resources available to particular counties, develop those into statewide resource listings, and to incorporate flexibility regarding the implementation of eligible programs.
- (5) To prevent or minimize the potential for developmental delay in children before the children reach the age of compulsory school attendance under IC 20-8.1-3-17.
- (6) To enhance certain federally funded eligible programs.
- (7) To strengthen the family unit through the following:
 - (A) Encouragement of parental involvement in a child's development and education.
 - (B) Prevention of disruptive employment conditions for

parents who are employed.

(C) Enhancement of the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their children, including those children with disabilities.

(8) To reduce the educational costs to society by reducing the need for special education services after children reach school age.

(9) To assure that children with disabilities when appropriate are integrated into programs available to children who are not disabled.

(10) Beginning in 2000, to ensure that every child who enrolls in kindergarten in Indiana has benefitted since birth from eligible programs available under step ahead.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-13

Step ahead statewide panel; establishment; membership; chairman

Sec. 13. (a) The step ahead statewide panel is established to implement the step ahead program.

(b) The panel consists of the following members:

(1) Six (6) members who:

(A) shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor; and

(B) are selected from representatives of the following state agencies:

(i) Division of mental health and addiction.

(ii) State department of health.

(iii) Division of children and family services.

(iv) Budget agency.

(v) Division of aging and rehabilitative services.

(vi) Department of education.

(vii) Executive staff of the lieutenant governor with knowledge in the area of employment and training programs.

(viii) Executive staff of the governor.

(2) Five (5) members who:

(A) shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor;

(B) are representative of the private sector; and

(C) are knowledgeable in the field of early childhood development.

(3) Four (4) members who:

(A) shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the state superintendent of public instruction; and

(B) are knowledgeable in early childhood education.

(c) The chairman of the panel shall be appointed by the governor from outside of the membership of the panel as described in subsection (b). The chairman serves at the pleasure of the governor.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21. Amended by P.L.1-1993, SEC.173; P.L.215-2001, SEC.90.

IC 20-1-1.8-14

Step ahead statewide panel; compensation of panel members

Sec. 14. (a) The members of the panel who are state employees are entitled to reimbursement for traveling expenses and other expenses actually incurred in connection with the member's duties, as provided in the state travel policies and procedures established by the Indiana department of administration and approved by the budget agency.

(b) Each member of the panel who is not a state employee is entitled to the minimum salary per diem provided by IC 4-10-11-2.1(b). Such a member is, also, entitled to reimbursement for traveling expenses and other expenses actually incurred in connection with the member's duties, as provided in the state travel policies and procedures established by the Indiana department of administration and approved by the budget agency.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-15

Utilization of division of children's services personnel

Sec. 15. The panel may utilize the personnel employed by the division of family and children established under IC 12-13-1-1 to assist the panel in performing its functions authorized under this chapter.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21. Amended by P.L.2-1992, SEC.688.

IC 20-1-1.8-16

Adoption of rules

Sec. 16. The panel may adopt rules under IC 4-22-2 to carry out its responsibilities.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-17

Step ahead statewide panel; powers and duties

Sec. 17. (a) The panel shall do the following:

(1) Establish guidelines to implement this chapter that comply with the regulations governing the distribution of the Child Care and Development Block Grant under 42 U.S.C. 658 et seq., including guidelines on the following:

(A) Subject to the requirements under sections 18 and 20 of this chapter, the content of the application and step ahead proposal.

(B) The types of early childhood programs that are eligible programs.

(C) Income eligibility guidelines for parents who are unable to afford the services provided by eligible entities.

(D) Subject to the availability of funds, a schedule for awarding coordination and implementation grants and the criteria used to award those grants under this chapter, including the following:

- (i) The degree to which available eligible programs are coordinated within the county under the proposal.
 - (ii) The extent of community commitment to step ahead initiatives.
 - (iii) The relative need for the county to become a step ahead county.
 - (iv) The extent to which multiple eligible programs and services are collocated throughout the county, including public schools.
 - (v) The extent to which the school corporations within the county cooperate in step ahead initiatives.
 - (vi) The quality reflected by comprehensive programming for preschool services and the commitment to consistent staff training opportunities.
 - (vii) The extent to which proposed eligible programs provide integrated programs for children with disabilities and children who are not disabled.
 - (E) Any limitations in the expenditure of step ahead grants.
 - (F) Reporting requirements of grant recipients or the step ahead county coordinator on the implementation of the step ahead programs within the county.
 - (G) The distribution of federal funds, including the Child Care and Development Block Grant under 42 U.S.C. 658 et seq., and other available funds to eligible programs.
 - (H) Any other pertinent matter.
 - (2) Develop minimum standards for eligible programs.
 - (3) Review each step ahead application for a coordination grant and each proposal for an implementation grant submitted by the convener.
 - (4) Approve those proposals that comply with this chapter.
 - (5) Conduct the assessments of step ahead programs under section 22 of this chapter.
 - (6) Monitor the overall implementation of step ahead, encourage the collaboration through the department's early childhood division to promote consistency in state efforts for young children, and report to the governor on its implementation.
 - (7) Any other task to facilitate the implementation of step ahead.
 - (b) The panel may contract for services to assist in the implementation of the step ahead program.
 - (c) The panel may designate as a step ahead county and step ahead grant recipient more than one (1) county if the participating counties:
 - (1) are contiguous to each other; and
 - (2) agree to jointly comply with this chapter.
- As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.*

IC 20-1-1.8-17.1 Repealed

(Repealed by P.L.1-1993, SEC.174.)

IC 20-1-1.8-17.2

Child care services bureau contracts; advanced funding provisions

Sec. 17.2. Notwithstanding IC 4-13-2-20 and IC 12-8-10-7 and in addition to the authorization to enter into contracts for services under section 17(b) of this chapter, any contract issued by the division of family and children for programs administered by the bureau of child care services, including without limitation any contract for the administration of the programs authorized under IC 12-17-15 and this chapter, may include a provision for advance funding if the provision is not inconsistent with the terms of any applicable federal law or regulation and any of the following conditions is met:

- (1) If the annual contract amount is at least fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) and the advance funding is not more than one-sixth ($1/6$) of the contract amount.
- (2) If the annual contract amount is less than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) and the advance funding is not more than one-half ($1/2$) of the contract amount.
- (3) If the advance funding is in the form of interim payments, with subsequent reconciliation of the amounts paid under the contract and the cost of the services actually provided.

As added by P.L.1-1993, SEC.175.

IC 20-1-1.8-18

Requirements for receipt of coordination grant

Sec. 18. To receive a coordination grant, the following must occur:

- (1) One (1) convener located within the county must submit to the panel an application under an agreement by the eligible entities in the county for a coordination grant on or before August 1 of a year that does the following:
 - (A) Designates a step ahead county coordinator to facilitate the development of the proposal.
 - (B) Designates a fiscal agent to receive the coordination grant.
 - (C) Includes any other information required under the guidelines.
- (2) Upon review of each application, the panel shall designate each step ahead county and shall award a coordination grant to the fiscal agent described in subdivision (1).

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-19

Receipt of coordination grant; development and submission of implementation proposal

Sec. 19. Upon receipt of a coordination grant, the step ahead county coordinator shall initiate the development of a detailed proposal to qualify for an implementation grant. The step ahead county coordinator shall submit the proposal to the panel on or before December 31 of the year in which the application is submitted.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-20

Implementation proposals; requirements

Sec. 20. The proposal must comply with the following minimum requirements:

- (1) Include a detailed description of the manner in which the eligible programs available within the county are to be implemented, coordinated, and monitored.
- (2) Certify that each eligible entity shall request and obtain a limited criminal history on each prospective employee hired by the eligible entity after July 1, 1991.
- (3) Designate a fiscal agent to administer the implementation grant.
- (4) Demonstrate how at least the following eligible programs may be offered, coordinated, and monitored within the entire county under an agreement with the providers of the following eligible programs:
 - (A) Preschool, including Head Start under 42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq., special education preschool, or developmental child care programs for preschool children.
 - (B) Child care programs.
 - (C) The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under 42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.
 - (D) Early intervention parent information programs.
 - (E) Individual family service plans.
 - (F) School age child care programs (commonly referred to as latch key programs).
 - (G) Family literacy programs that may be funded through Even Start under 20 U.S.C. 2741 et seq.
 - (H) Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program under 42 U.S.C. 701 et seq.
 - (I) Job Training Partnership Act programs under 29 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.
 - (J) Parental involvement programs.
 - (K) Children of children child care programs aimed at serving children of teenage parents to encourage the teenage parents to graduate from high school or participate in vocational training.
 - (L) Vocational training programs for unemployed parents.
 - (M) Health, nutrition, and vaccination programs.
 - (N) State medical assistance services for eligible individuals under IC 12-15.
- (5) Certify that the eligible programs described in subdivision (4) are provided at no cost to parents of children who qualify under the income eligibility guidelines and at an affordable or sliding fee for other parents.
- (6) Describe the manner in which the implementation grant will be directed to and expended by eligible programs.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21. Amended by P.L.2-1992,

SEC.689.

IC 20-1-1.8-21

Distribution of implementation grants; priority for continued state funding

Sec. 21. (a) The fiscal agent for the implementation grant is authorized to distribute the implementation grant received under this chapter in accordance with the approved proposal.

(b) If an eligible entity received state funds to implement an eligible program before becoming a step ahead eligible program, the eligible entity shall be given priority with regard to receiving continued state funding to implement the eligible program under this chapter with no break in continuity of service from the prior year.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-22

Assessment of programs and services

Sec. 22. (a) To evaluate the effectiveness of step ahead as the program relates to the step ahead goals listed in section 12 of this chapter, the panel shall employ the following assessment mechanisms:

(1) The step ahead county coordinator shall annually report to the panel on the development, quality, and appropriateness of the individual family service plans for children whose parents qualify under the income eligibility guidelines.

(2) The step ahead county coordinator shall annually report to the panel on the number of children who:

(A) are utilizing step ahead services; and

(B) do not qualify under the income eligibility guidelines.

(3) The panel shall annually assess the results of any readiness program under IC 20-10.1-21 for students in kindergarten and grade 1 to determine whether children enrolling in school after benefiting from step ahead demonstrate greater readiness for learning. The department shall cooperate with the panel in this regard by assisting in defining the term "readiness" and supporting the evaluation based on knowledge and training in early childhood.

(4) Any other valid assessment technique or method approved by the panel.

(b) The panel shall implement a schedule for assessing step ahead programs, utilizing prior evaluation results and techniques learned through the department's pilot preschool programs.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21.

IC 20-1-1.8-23

Developmental child care programs for preschool children

Sec. 23. (a) Each step ahead proposal shall ensure the implementation of a preschool or developmental child care program for preschool children.

(b) The goals of the preschool or developmental child care

program for preschool children are as follows:

- (1) To enhance the child's readiness for learning and facilitate the transition from home to school when the preschool child reaches the age of compulsory school attendance.
- (2) To identify developmental problems or concerns in preschool children and to make referrals to the appropriate service providers or to provide the appropriate services.
- (3) To prevent disruptive employment conditions for parents who are employed.
- (4) To ensure a continuity in access to step ahead programs as each preschool child nears the age of compulsory school attendance.

(c) To qualify for an implementation grant under this chapter for preschool or developmental child care programs for preschool children, the eligible entity implementing a preschool or developmental child care program for preschool children must demonstrate cooperation with the following programs within the county:

- (1) Public schools, particularly those public schools that provide preschool or special education preschool services.
- (2) Head Start programs under 42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.
- (3) Infants and toddlers with disabilities programs under IC 12-17-15.
- (4) County health department programs.
- (5) Private industry council programs.
- (6) Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs under 42 U.S.C. 1786 et seq.
- (7) Community mental retardation and mental health centers that provide services to preschool children with disabilities.
- (8) The county office of family and children.
- (9) Consumer representation groups.

As added by P.L.34-1991, SEC.21. Amended by P.L.2-1992, SEC.690; P.L.21-1992, SEC.13; P.L.4-1993, SEC.250; P.L.5-1993, SEC.263; P.L.1-1994, SEC.92.